

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 AF-10 NIC-01 /114 W

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R 191135Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0556

INFO AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4030

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT BANS RIGHTIST POLITICAL PARTY

REF: (A) LISBON 3890; (B) LISBON 3770

SUMMARY: GOP HAS BANNED FAR RIGHT POLITICAL PARTY KNOWN AS PARTIDO NACIONALISTA PORTUGUES (PNP) ON GROUNDS PARTY PLANS TO OVERTHROW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. PARTY, WHOSE SECRETARY GENERAL IS AN EX-PORTUGUESE LEGION LEADER, IS ONLY PARTY BANNED SINCE COUP. GOP ACTION COMES IN WAKE OF CHILE WEEK, IN WHICH DANGER OF RIGHTIST RESURGENCE MAIN THEME. END SUMMARY.

1. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN ITS REGULAR MEETING SEPT 17 DECLARED PARTIDO NACIONALISTA PORTUGUES (PNP) ILLEGAL, ORDERED ITS OPORTO HEADQUARTERS CLOSED, AND GAVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS BE UNDERTAKEN IN AFTERMATH OF WHAT IT ASSERTED WERE PROPOSALS BY THAT PARTY TO OVERTHROW NATION'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

2. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING COUNCIL SESSION, MILITARY AND REGULAR POLICE FORCES SURROUNDED PNP OPORTO HEAD-QUARTERS AND SEIZED DOCUMENTS FOUND THERE, AS WELL AS ONE PORTUGUESE LEGION UNIFORM. NO ARMS WERE ENCOUNTERED;
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AND NO ARRESTS REPORTED.

3. PNP, FOUNDED JULY 24 IN OPORTO, HAS BEEN UNDER HEAVY ATTACK FROM LEFT IN RECENT WEEKS. OPPONENTS ASSERT IT A REINCARNATION OF THE BANNED PORTUGUESE LEGION, AN EXTREME RIGHT PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION WHICH SERVED AS A PROP OF THE SALAZAR/CAETANO REGIMES. PARTY HAS NEVER IDENTIFIED MOST OF ITS LEADERS (EXCEPT FOR SECRETARY-GENERAL ARTUR ALBERTO DA SILVA, ALLEGEDLY AN EX-LEGIONNAIRE AND A LIEUTENANT IN THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL GUARD) AND APPARENTLY NEVER EXPANDED OUTSIDE OPORTO AREA. ITS PROGRAM WAS NEVER PUBLISHED. IN ONLY COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY PARTY (AUGUST 1) IT CALLED ATTENTION TO "ITS ABSOLUTE REPUDIATION OF IDEOLOGIES, CULTURES AND PROGRAMS WHICH ARE NOT STRICTLY PORTUGUESE", AND WARNED OF "HEGEMONIC IMPERIALIST ATTEMPTS TO ENSLAVE THE COUNTRY".

4. SOON AFTER PNP CREATED, ATTACKS ON IT BEGAN. A RADIO FREE PORTUGAL BROADCAST PICKED UP BY FBIS AUGUST 2 (021250Z FBIS LONDON) WARNED THAT "FASCIST (ARE) COMING OUT OF HIBERNATION INTO WHICH THEY FORCED BY 25 OF APRIL", AND THAT PNP ONLY A FASCIST COVER GROUP.

5. AFTER END OF CHILE WEEK, IN WHICH PRINCIPAL THEME WAS DANGER OF RESURGENT RIGHT, ATTACKS ON PNP INCREASED. THREE NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED ARTICLES SEPT 14 CLAIMING THAT PNP CIRCULATING LETTERS TO FORMER LEGIONNAIRES IN OPORTO PLEDGING TO "RECOMMENCE THE STRUGGLE INTERRUPTED BY APRIL 25". LETTERS ALLEGED TO CLAIM THAT PORTUGUESE LEGION BETRAYED BY ITS LEADERS ON APRIL 25 AND THEREFORE NOT ABLE TO FIGHT ON THAT OCCASION. LETTERS SAID TO URGE RECIPIENTS TO REORGANIZE AND TO DONATE MONEY TO THE PNP.

6. COMMENT: PNP ONLY PARTY TO HAVE BEEN BANNED SINCE ANP OUTLAWED DAY AFTER COUP. ATTEMPT OF PNP TO BASE ITS SUPPORT ON EX-PORTUGUESE LEGIONNAIRES CLEARLY INTOLERABLE TO GOVERNMENT AND PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT COALITION. PNP APPEARS TO BE A PAPER ORGANIZATION WITH LITTLE IF ANY POPULAR SUPPORT. OTHER MORE POWERFUL
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RIGHTIST ORGANIZATIONS ARE STIRRING (REFS A AND B), ESPECIALLY IN NORTH, AND THERE ARE RUMORS OF ATTEMPTS BY RIGHTISTS TO PULL OFF COUNTERCOUP IN FUTURE. THE CABINET DECISION TO SQUELCH THE PNP IS CLEAR WARNING TO OTHER RIGHTISTS THAT THE OLD REGIME IS DEAD AND WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REVIVE. COSTA GOMES HIMSELF MADE THIS POINT IN AN INTERVIEW WITH O GLOBO OF RIO DE JANEIRO PUBLISHED SEPT 11 IN WHICH HE STRESSED

THAT APRIL 25 IS IRREVERSIBLE. DECISION ALSO PERHAPS
SHOWS THAT GOP FEARS FAR RIGHT MORE THAN FAR LEFT,
NO PARTY OF WHICH HAS BEEN BANNED.
SCOTT

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